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Thomas Beery 37267
Director
Essex County Toxics and
Pollutants Project
7 Main Street
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(201) 325-1943

Dear Mr. Faherty:

As you are probably aware, there are four large asbestos dumps in the area of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge. One dump is in the refuge, one is on the banks of the Passaic River in Millington, and two are on property occupied by private residences. A news story, detailed maps, and other information is included with this letter in case you do not know all of the details.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Division of Hazard Management has determined that these dumps pose serious hazards and should be cleaned up. Because of a lack of funds it is unlikely that a state sponsored effort will be made in the near future. There are, however, many less expensive paths of action through which the NJ DEP, U.S. EPA, Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, and concerned citizens can greatly reduce the threats posed by these dumps. These dumps are an extremely serious environmental problem and a real threat to human health. The situation can only get worse unless the following things are done:

A trail in the public access part of the Refuge actually leads to the exposed surface of the dump site which is 100 yards from a parking area. The map of site #4 details this situation. The trail leading to the dump must be closed immediately by the Refuge management and the dump site must be removed from public access through the posting of signs and use of a fence. People coming to use a wilderness area must not be unknowingly brought in contact with toxic wastes.

The banks and bottom of Great Brook are covered with the carcinogen. The asbestos should be removed from the banks and bottom of the stream and the banks should be stabilized to keep the wastes out of the water. The stream should be closed to fishing below the dump. These measures should also be carried out by the Refuge management.

The residents of the property where asbestos has been dumped should be informed of the hazards of asbestos exposure (mesothelioma which is 100% fatal, stomach cancer etc). Asbestos in the immediate vicinity of the homes should be removed. The wells on these sites should be tested for asbestos, organic chemicals, and heavy metals. The NJ DEP could best accomplish these tasks.

Erosion of the dumpsite behind the TIFA plant in Millington is out of control. The topsoil is almost completely gone from the banks of the pile and is doing nothing to keep the asbestos out of the Passaic River. These tanks must be permanently stabilized. This should be undertaken by TIFA, the NJDEP or the Town of Millington.

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Test wells, as called for in the DEP report, should be installed at the TIFA site and in the Great Swamp where barrels of organic waste residues are protruding from the ground and floating in the water.

The National Gypsum Company should be taken to court for creating a public nuisance, violations of the state Water Pollution Control Act, Violations of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, violation of state solid waste regulations and the multitude of other laws that they have surely violated. Officials of this company knowingly dumped hazardous wastes into the drinking water supply of millions of people. The state has seen fit to indict officials of Chemical Control for similar activities and the offences of National Gypsum are more serious in that the Passaic River and the Buried Valley Sole Source Aquifer are vital sources of drinking water while the Elizabeth River is not potable. The clean-up money available to New Jersey is near zero while the list of hazardous waste dumps is approaching 300. The state and federal governments must begin to force individual polluters to clean their own wastes and must also make examples of the worst violators.

Finally, concerned citizens and environmental groups should form an ad hoc group to see that the problem is not perpetually pushed to the back burner and that realistic approaches are taken towards solving the problem.

In the face of dwindling clean-up funds it is important that many agencies and government bodies share the responsibility of averting the dangers of hazardous wastes.

Sincerely,

Thomas Berry
Thomas Berry.

Copies to:

Anthony Farrow, Abandoned Sites, Division of Hazard Management, NJ DEP, Yardville
N.J. 08620, (609) 292-5561.

Charles Warren, Administrator U.S. EPA Region II, 26 Federal Plaza, New York, N.Y.
10007 (Contact Rich Cahill, (212) 264-2515).

Jack Pillio, Manager Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, Great Swamp National
Wildlife Refuge Road 1, Box 148, Basking Ridge N.J., 07920, (201) 647-1222

Michael Barta, 299 Lake Rd., Basking Ridge N.J. 07920

Robert Dupont, Mayor Millington N.J., Millington N.J. 07946

Mr. Livingston, Director TIFA Inc., 5836 Division Ave., Millington N.J.,
07946, (201) 647-4570

Ralph Scarano, Rapid Industrial Supply, 430 Adams Street, Newark N.J., 07114
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Muriel Sims, Springfield Highschool, 237 S. Broad Street, Elizabeth N.J.; 07202.

Ed Loyd, Executive Director, NJ PIRG, 204 West State Street, Trenton New Jersey,
08608, (609) 393-7474.

Zana Coco, Star Ledger, 11 South Street, Morristown N.J., 07960, 539-7960

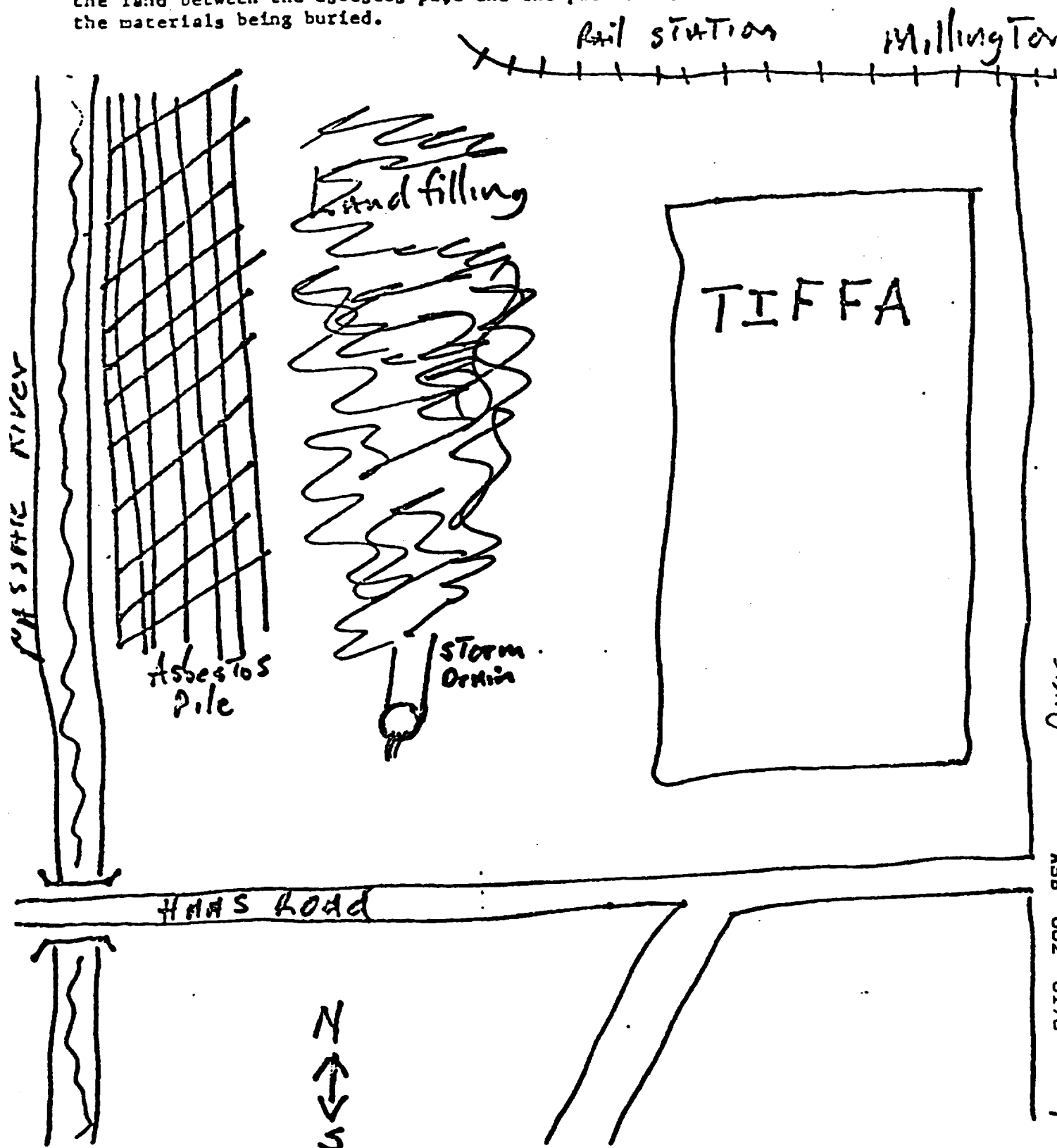
Sharon McCrae, Echo-Sentinel, 3 Mountain Blvd., Warren N.J., 07060

Inga Saffron, Courier-News, Rt. 22, Bridgewater N.J., 08807, 7228800

Patty Pierucci, Bernardsville News, 17 Morristown Rd., Bernardsville N.J., 07924

- And possibly other members of the media.

SITE #1: The old National Gypsum plant, now occupied by TIFA. The asbestos dump occupies the entire back of the property, adjacent to the Passaic River. By walking along the bank of the river at the base of the asbestos pile one can easily observe that the soil cover is eroding wholesale and asbestos is entering the water. ~~Landfilling~~ landfilling is also being done by TIFA on the land between the asbestos pile and the plant. Asbestos wastes are among the materials being buried.



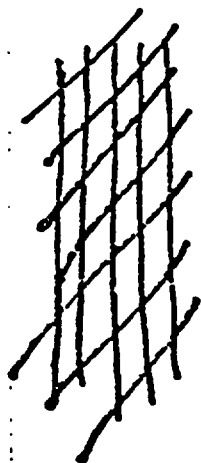
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SITE #2. This site is easily located by the large dome type tennis court directly across the road. The name on the mail box at this site is Hopkins and a small business, The Pine Valley Tree Service also occupies the site. Asbestos can be seen in the driveway and lining a road to the back of the property.. There are exposed piles of the material at the back of the property and large amounts of it covered with soil around the property.

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Exposed
Asbestos

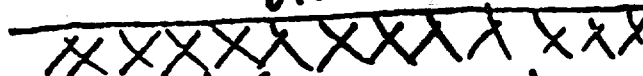


Exposed Asbestos

Pine Valley
Tree Service



Dirt Road



Asbestos



Hopkins

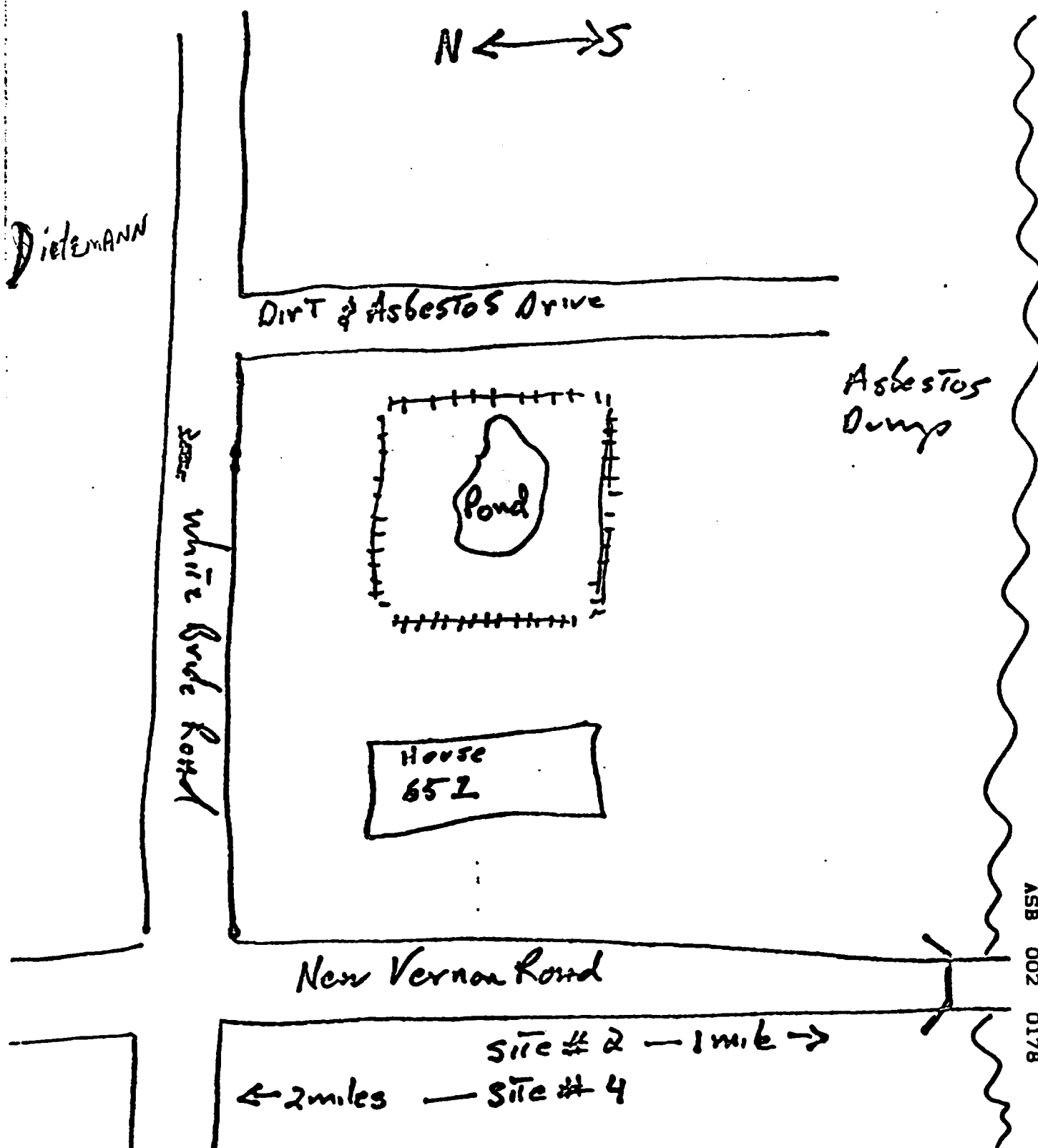
New Vernon Road

Buried Asbestos

Boundary of Wildlife Refuge

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SITE #3. This dump site is on the property of the first house on White Bridge Road after New Vernon Rd., 651 is the house number. The asbestos is at the back of the horse pasture, adjacent to the brook. Asbestos can also be seen exposed in the driveway. The topographical map and the New Jersey road map do not agree exactly on the roads at this point but the site should not be hard to find.



Site #4. This site is near a hiking trail in the Grant Swamp. The parking lot for the trail is just North of Great Brook on Long Hill Road. The asbestos dump is bordered on the south by the brook and on the North by the trail. The asbestos extends all of the way into the brook. Asbestos can also be seen paving the hiking trail.

